1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

511 426 Analysis of the family budgets of the agriculturists in the village revealed that 10% of them were surplus, 24% were balanced and the rest were deficit budgets. Exact figures regarding the extent of indebtedness could not be obtained as the people invariably sought to conceal information on this subject. According to our rough estimate, 55% to 60% of the families are indebted. As relatively few persons can get agricultural or land improvement loans from the government at a reasonable rate of interest, and as there is no co-operative society in the village, most people have to take recourse to the money-lenders either in the village or, preferably, in a neighbouring one. Petty loans may be obtained from well-to-do shopkeepers and peasants. The rate of interest varies greatly. For large loans a mortgage is generally insisted upon, and anything between 6% and 12% compound interest is charged. For petty loans interest is charged at the rate of 2 annas per rupee per month. If ornaments or other valuables are pawned, the rate of interest is reduced even for the smaller loans. Borrowing in kind also takes place. Seeds are often obtained on loan, and are returned after the harvest with 25% interest. In several cases the indebtedness of the family could be attributed to over-spending in socio-religious ceremonies and litigation rather than to agricultural needs.

241 432 The organization of agricultural pursuits rests mainly on the head of the family, although grown-up sons—if they are living with the parents—are also consulted. When buying or selling land the advice of the elders of the extended family is always obtained. This has to be done before mortgaging family property against loans. The scope for individual initiative and innovations is very limited, for the system of agriculture still largely follows the traditional patterns and is governed to a great extent by the agricultural lore passed from generation to generation through oral tradition.

241 465 Most agriculturists can manage the cultivation of their fields with the help of family labour. The traditional system on inter-caste relations secures for them the specialized services of the occupational castes. The more well-to-do landowners have Madiga families attached to them. However, the migration of some Madiga families and concentration of considerable areas of land in the possession of a few families make it almost essential for many agriculturists to employ additional labour. In the busy season even